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A D D R E S S ,

**Delivered to the inhabitants of the County of Stan-
stead, at a Public Meeting of that County, held at
the North Meeting-House in Stanstead
on Thursday, 24th of April, 1834,**

BY MARCUS CHILD, ESQ.

**MR. CHAIRMAN—GENTLEMEN ELECTORS, OF THE COUNTY OF
STANSTEAD :—**

It is with no ordinary feelings of gratification, that I see so many (notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather) assembled to-day, to take into consideration the state of the Province, and the proceedings of the House of Assembly in the last Session—that you feel a lively interest in the political transactions that now agitate the people of other parts of this Province; an interest which you, as inhabitants thereof, and British subjects, most assuredly ought to feel. You have, gentlemen, an interest in the affairs of the Government that affords you protection which should induce you to be prompt on all such occasions as the present; the safety of your persons and property depend thereon; and when violations of the Constitution, and great abuses do exist in the Colonial Government, it ceases to afford that necessary protection which you require. You have then a right, in common with His Majesty's subjects in Great Britain, to inquire into its proceedings. You have, Gentlemen, an undoubted right to private opinions in relation to these matters, and to meet and compare and publicly express those opinions which then become public opinion. The members that sit for this County are elected by your votes, and it is your duty and privilege to inquire into their public acts, and come to a right understanding of them, that they may meet your approbation or disapprobation, whatever their public conduct may merit. The greatest mark of distinction a member can wear, the highest honour he, as such, can attain, is to possess the confidence and unqualified approbation of those by whom he is best known, and supported. This, Gentlemen, is due to your Representatives, if they have conducted themselves according to your wishes, if they have attended to your interests and endeavoured to promote your political welfare, your applause is their happiness. If on the other hand they have been influenced by other motives, have proved themselves recreant, when your constitutional rights were endangered, and it was their duty to have defended and preserved them, they then should be made to suffer your just displeasure. I have, Sirs, as far as opportunity presented, endeavoured to inform myself in regard to the state of the Province, and I beg your candid attention to the brief remarks which I shall now make.

The Inhabitants of this Province, have often very justly complained of certain grievances that yet remain undressed, and which never can be entirely removed, without an amendment in the Constitution of the Province. In the year 1827 Petitions, signed by 87,000 persons, containing a statement of the grievances, that then existed, were laid before the House of Commons in England, which were received, and referred to a special committee, who investigated and reported on all matters that referred to them. That report was not further acted on by the Commons : It appears to have been the conviction of the committee, as well as the agents, who went from Canada with the Petition, that the ministry would carry into full effect, what the Report recommended ; and as the Commons, both in Great Britain and the Colonies, act with loyalty and deference to His Majesty, it was expected by them, and in this Colony, the ministry would be guided by it, in such measures as would have long ago " composed the internal dissensions of this Province."

Many even among us, have pretended that these grievances have all been fully redressed ; and they are now running among the Inhabitants, and crying out that the country is in a state of Revolution ? If such, Sir, mean to be understood to refer to the 92 Resolutions it must of consequence follow that there are 92 Revolutions.

I shall not, Sir, occupy this meeting in noticing the arguments of those who oppose necessary and constitutional Reform in this Province. I hold now in my hand that report of the Imperial Committee, and the evidence on which it is founded, and that you may have a clear idea of these grievances, I shall read extracts from the testimony of J. Neilson, Esq. M. P. P. taken on the 20th, May, 1828, whose statements are entitled to the highest credit.

(Here Mr. Child read extracts from the minutes of evidence, before that Select Committee, page 65.)

He then resumed.—A few of these grievances, Gentlemen, have been attempted to be redressed, but it has been a very partial redress ; most of them remain, and we daily feel their effects. Among those that remain undressed, is the state of the Finances of the Province. The House of Assembly during its last Session, by their Standing Committee on the Finances, presented an humble Address to the Governor in Chief, praying that his Lordship would direct the proper offices, to lay before them detailed statements of the Public Revenue during the last year, and the amount of money then in the Provincial Treasury. These were furnished, but in such a state as to afford no certain proof of the accuracy of the one, or the certainty of the other. Under such circumstances, that Committee called before them various public Officers, connected with the collection of the Revenues and Public Accounts of the Province, to ascertain, if possible, the accuracy of the statements exhibited. In prosecuting this examination, they ascertained that the Collector of the Customs at Quebec, paid to the Receiver General, at his office, about 18,000*l* at one time, last year, which sum the Receiver General forgot to put to the credit of the Province. Thus, Sir, the House of Assembly, after collecting all the information they are able to on the

subject, are still in the dark, and in doubt as to the real and exact state of the Treasury, and are actually unable to ascertain what the Revenue of the Province is. The Revenues of the country are supplied by the Inhabitants. Every man in the Province who consumes an article on which duties have been paid, pays an indirect tax, and he thereby contributes in replenishing the Treasury. In this manner, Gentlemen, are raised all the monies that have been granted for our Schools, Roads, &c. During the last Session 15,000*l*, were granted by the House of Assembly to improve the Roads and Bridges in the several Counties of this Province; but the Legislative Council threw the Bill under their table, and as I heard an Hon. Member of that body say "the country ought not to have any money for roads and public improvements, *until the House of Assembly would vote a supply Bill.*" This remark, Gentlemen, shows the feeling that prevails in that Honourable "Body of Life Legislators," from which you, as well as the other parts of the Province can see what evils to the Country must follow.

Sir, I should be happy to stop here in speaking of the abuses in the Finance department; but duty compels me to state that a Committee of the House of Assembly, have, by their Report on the affairs of the late Receiver General, ascertained that he is a public defaulter "for the sum of about 156,000*l* currency; monies paid by the people of this Province and applied to the private use of that Gentlemen. Is this right? Is it not a grievance? are your Representatives right in looking after what their constituents pay, and seeing that it is not squandered, but applied to its proper uses—the support of the Civil Government, the Administration of justice, a relief to the indigent, sick and insane among us and the public improvements of the country, Education, Navigation Roads &c.—Surely, there can be but one opinion on such matters, among unprejudiced men. Sir, another grievance which remains undressed is, the rejection of Bills by the Legislative Council, which have passed the House of Assembly, and which have been called for by their constituents, and deemed by them, absolutely necessary for the good government, and prosperity of the country.—The House of Assembly does not complain against the Council because they possess this power of rejecting their Bills; such power is necessary and proper for them to possess; but it is against the abuse of that power that they and the country complain. The use and abuse of that power, under their present constitution and composition, appear, if we refer to their present history of legislation, to be inseparable and this must of necessity be the consequence while they are not responsible to the country for which they legislate. A Bill amending the Elementary School Law and continuing it for a longer period, passed the House of Assembly last Session which authorizes the freeholders in the several School Districts, by their own votes, to raise by tax, a specified sum, or sums of money, on themselves, for such repairs of their School Houses, as they deem necessary. This Bill, which every District feels the need of, was rejected by the Council, and why? because it was too democratic.—Surely if there is pure Democracy in the world, it is to be found in the House of Com-

ions in England ; as our House of Assembly is analogous to that branch of the Metropolitan Government, they should not have their Bills rejected.

The Inhabitants of this Province, complained that they were unable to manage their local concerns. This grievance has been partly redressed. The towns of Quebec and Montreal, have since been incorporated, though the Acts were sent home for His Majesty's sanction, and it was granted. The Townships and Parishes in this Province, being devoid of the same powers to manage their local concerns, the House of Assembly have passed the Township and Parish Officer's Bill, and the Legislative Council have rejected it. Sir, the Legislative Council of this Province, are absolute in the exercise of their powers. To no human power in this colony, are they accountable. There is no power in the Province that can affect them, but the Almighty. They are nominated and recommended by the Colonial Executive, and called to their station by the King's Mandamus, and when in possession of it, the King who appoints nor the people for whose benefit they are appointed, cannot exercise any control over them or their acts, let them be ever so injurious to the country. If the Legislative Councillors were elected, they should not be unconditionally, for life ; nor be invested with such absolute power as they at present possess. Men possess dispositions of which even themselves are not fully aware, and which, a change in their circumstances, frequently calls into action. How then is it possible for one man to judge of the latent principles which may lay in the breast of another, and which may develop themselves, as soon as they may be actively exercised. For the safety and well-being of the Province, it is then highly necessary that the Members should be accountable somewhere for their proceedings. And to whom shall they be responsible ? If we answer, the government at home, to send there on every occasion, would certainly be attended with great delays and trouble, which could not fail to be equally injurious to the accusers and accused. How then can the evil be remedied ? The House of Assembly have declared in their resolutions, that they ought to be elected. They should not be elected precisely in the same manner as the Members of the House of Assembly are, for in such case they would be a mere counterpart to that body. They should be so chosen as to form a proper counterpoise to the House of Assembly, and be amenable to the country. The House of Assembly have not prescribed the mode of applying the principle of election, but are confident that the Imperial Parliament, in its justice and wisdom, will easily devise some means by which it may be effected to the satisfaction of Colony. The mildness and forbearance of the House of Assembly, is very remarkable, when we consider that since 1810, they have had large majorities in favor of reform. They have, at one period since, had their expectation raised to a full and effectual remedy of all the abuses in the colonial government. This was when Sir James Kempt arrived to administer the government, under the new Colonial policy that was so fondly expected, from the report which I have referred to. But forbearance in the guardians of the chartered rights of the

country; under long existing and unredressed abuses and grievances ceases now to be a virtue in them; therefore the House of Assembly have, in pursuance of their duty to their constituents, fully entered into an investigation of important matters and in their ninety-two Resolutions they have made a full and fair exposition of the state of the Province.—These Resolutions, Gentlemen, are founded on facts and principles which are supported by abundant documentary evidence and correct political philosophy.

It is expected, should the Petition to the Home government, which is founded on these Resolutions, be favorably considered, and salutary and constitutional Reform take effect, that incalculable benefits will thus be derived therefrom, to the inhabitants of the Province; but should the evils of the present Constitution be continued, who, I ask, will answer for the growing embarrassments and discontents which will inevitably be the consequence. Does it become us who owe allegiance to His Majesty to join in perpetuating these abuses, that have and do sow discord and discontent among His Imperial subjects? Surely, Sir, we could not violate that sacred obligation by tamely looking on, but are acting in accordance with the true principles of attachment to His Majesty's Crown and dignity and laws, when we honestly make known our grievances to him and his Parliament, by our honorable Petitions.

The Members of the House are accused of being seditious and disloyal. Such accusations the House expect, from those on whom a reform of abuses must press. They, Sir, and their satellites, are the only persons that have any thing to fear from Reform. Their "craft is totally in danger." But that the connexion between Britain and Canada is endangered by the required Reform, is mere nonsense. The fact we may well consider, under existing evils, that it is endangered if Reform does not take place. I am fully persuaded there is not an individual Member who voted for the ninety-two Resolutions, who had a wish to be detached from Great Britain, nor do I believe the mother Country on her part desires a separation; if she did, these desires would be manifested. So if the people or their Representatives, had such a wish, it would show itself.

Sir, the House of Assembly claim no higher privileges, than those long enjoyed by the House of Commons in England, which the House of Assembly is said to resemble. If our powers were analogous to theirs, a majority would displace the persons in the Province, that are analogous to the Ministry in Britain. We have in the ninety-two Resolutions, impeached the Governor-in-Chief. His Councils or his Ministers, are not responsible; consequently beyond the control of the House. They can advise the Governor to acts which his own good sense and reason do not approve, and when he pays respect to the opinion of his Council, for their faults, he is responsible. Lord Aylmer is, no doubt, a very good man in social and private life; such as we should all respect and esteem. His public acts are what he is impeached for, and if the principles of the British Constitution were in full operation in this Colony, instead of the Governor-in-Chief, it would be his Ministers, his advisers, that would

be impeached ; but they are beyond responsibility, and yet we find these Ministers, advisers, filling all situations in the Executive, the Legislative, and Judicial departments of the government. They are clever men, they sit in the Executive Council—the Legislative Council—and are the Judges in the Court of Appeals, besides many minor situations which some of them have occasionally filled. You might go from one of their departments to the other, and you would see the same individual filling the same seats, and discharging his omnigenous duties, and always beyond any responsibility to any power in this colony.

Sir—there has also been an unconstitutional application of the money to the Treasury, which the House cannot approve. They have attached as a condition to the Supply Bill of 1833, which was, merely, that no one should receive more than one salary from the local government. In doing this, they feel that they are borne out by precedents of the Parliament in England. The Legislative Council have however thought fit to reject it. There are many men now holding offices under the local government, and receiving out of the Provincial funds two, and even three salaries, besides fees, without the authority of law.

The House of Assembly pray against these evils, and humbly hope they may be removed—such, gentlemen, are some of the evils which the House of Assembly have attempted to expose, and discountenance.

His Excellency, in his speech at the close of the last Session, has desired me to communicate what he has said to my constituents. In obedience, therefore, to his expressed wish, I shall do myself the honour to read that part of his speech at the prorogation.

In reading the speech, when Mr. Child came to the sentence which concludes thus, “the words which I have first addressed to you,” he observed—I am very happy, gentlemen, to have the honour to present, not only the part specified by his Excellency, but the whole of his speech to my constituents—(having finished the perusal of the speech he resumed.)

And now, gentlemen, if you are of the same opinion, if you approve of his Excellency's language in the speech, you will, of course, join him in the censure ; you will resolve, that the majority of the Members of the House of Assembly of this Province are *crazy men, madmen*, or “*men of disordered intellects*.” But if you should be of a different opinion, you will approve their proceedings. You have, doubtless, been informed, that the House, by these Resolutions, intend a Revolution ; but I am convinced that you know the difference between *Resolution* and *Revolution*. We, Sir, are convinced that we ought to have the privilege of managing our local concerns, and we are substantiated in this conviction, by the opinion of the English House of Commons—they declare that it is no more than our right. Sir, when we look upon the prospects of our neighbours, we are often induced to enquire, why do we not prosper ? The truth is, Sir, we do not enjoy the rights and privileges to which we have a just claim. The general construction of our Government is as bad as any on the face of the earth ; and we are actually entitled to greater privileges than those enjoyed by any nation under heaven—and, because

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we demand these privileges we are abused, and treated with contempt. I am happy to perceive, that no such language is contained in the Resolutions I have now heard read for your adoption; it proves to the world that the constituency can approve of the 92 Resolutions, and of the proceedings of the House of Assembly, in calm and dignified language—such as they would address to their Sovereign, or his Representative, and such as they would be happy to have addressed to them and their Representatives. If your Resolutions had been couched in such language as his Excellency has seen fit to address to your members, I should certainly feel it my duty thus far, to oppose them; but if he lose respect for himself, we should not, by his example, and its irritation, be led into a similar error. The people, Sir, should respect and defend the person of the King's Representative; and if they cannot do it for his sake, they are bound to do it for the King's sake.

To most of us, this is not the land of our birth; but in adopting it we take it as it is, with all its privileges and disadvantages—it is the land of our adoption and choice, and as properly ours as though it were the land of our birth: its chartered rights are ours, and it is to our political happiness and prosperity to join its ancient inhabitants in supporting and improving what they have obtained by their birth and their blood, "civil and religious liberty." These privileges are dear to every inhabitant of Lower-Canada, let him be by birth of whatever nation.

Misrepresentations are made use of to oppose reform, and to render contemptible the 92 Resolutions of the House of Assembly. These are exactly such means as I expected would be adopted; that is, to divide the people, and that will nullify their power. Those of us who have adopted this as our country, from the United States, England, Ireland and Scotland, that speak the English language, are, by all means, and without reason, endeavoured to be set against the ancient French inhabitants of the country, and to carry their point, its partisans would set the Englishmen against each other, and all these against those of the French language—and thus they may effect for a time, but the day is not far distant when truth will take place of error, when justice will cause the innocent to be free, and the guilty to fear and tremble; when pecuniary interests will not be allowed to fatten on the virtue of the people, when the truth and justice of the 92 Resolutions will not be questioned. They are just in exposing the mismanagement of the present Government, and if need be, they can be supported by documentary evidence—I challenge any man to show that they are founded on facts, yea, notorious facts—even the mind of the most prejudiced cannot doubt the truth of them, and those in the court of public opinion who are opposing them, dare not dispute the truth of what they say. They tell you "the Resolutions tend to Revolution!"

It was some power the gillie gillie us,
To see ourselves as others see us,
It was frae monie a blunder free us,
An' foolish nation.

1 I can assure you, gentlemen, that no Revolution is intended by the
 2 fifty-six members that voted for the Resolutions—it is, in their opinion,
 3 to prevent Revolution that they were passed. If there are fifty-six men
 4 in the country, that would devote their very existence to preserve the ties
 5 that bind us to Britain, I honestly believe, that the fifty-six Members that
 6 voted for the Resolutions are those fifty-six men—they would be the last
 7 1766 that would be found in the colony that would leave it, and for the
 8 most and most obvious reason, because the country can obtain no good
 9 by it, but would lose the greatest benefit, that any people ever possessed,
 10 and the abuses complained of be unredressed.

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